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ABSTRACT

This book discusses a study of teacher communities in two middle schools. Chapter 1 examines community and teachers' work, highlighting what a teacher community is, the theory and practice of community, problems in constructing a theory of community, and reform efforts to build teacher professional communities. Chapter 2 describes the efforts of faculty and staff at Louis Brandeis Middle School which serves a diverse student population with a broad range of economic backgrounds. The school is undergoing structural reorganization in response to the growing national movement of middle schools. Chapter 3 discusses C. Wright Mills Middle School's teacher community. The school, which is also very diverse, closed and reopened in 1984 with a mostly new administration and teaching staff. Then, 5 years later, it underwent another series of restructuring efforts. Chapter 4 discusses distinguishing features of the two schools' teacher professional communities and reexamines common practical and theoretical understandings of teacher community. The chapter suggests that the mainstream reform rhetoric around teacher professional community is so broadly employed and dominant that it masks the enormous differences between the schools. Chapter 5 details lessons learned from the schools, highlighting implications for teachers, administrators, researchers, and policymakers and exploring how the two schools might help inform broader policy discussions on fostering teacher community in other schools. An appendix presents the study methodology (data collection, analysis and growing understandings, and personal predispositions). (Contains references.) (SM)

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